

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Board of the City of Mesa met in a regular session at the Parks and Recreation office at 200 S. Center Street, Building 1, Mesa, on August 13, 2008.

Members Present:

Brian Etheridge
Russ Gillard
Connie Gullatt-Whiteman
Steve Ikeda
David Martinez
Michelle Udall
Marilyn Wilson
Mark Yarbrough

Staff Present:

Dawn Bies
J.D. Dockstader
Dale Furnas
Mike Holste
Bob Huhn
Andrea Moore
Kelly Rafferty
Rochelle Rotert
Alfred Smith
Sherry Woodley

Members Absent:

Frank Alger, excused
Don Goodrum, excused
Tim Gump, excused

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Connie Gullatt-Whiteman, Chair.

Welcome new Board members

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman introduced Steve Ikeda, the newest member of the Parks Board and asked Mr. Ikeda to provide the Board with some background information about himself. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman said that Tim Gump, another new Board member, would be formally introduced to the Board at the September meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if there was a motion for approval of the minutes from the June 11, 2008 Parks Board meeting. Marilyn Wilson requested the minutes be amended to change paragraph 3 on page 3, striking the word "recommended" and replacing it with "recommended discussing". Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if there was a motion for approval of the amended minutes. Ms. Wilson made a motion, Brian Etheridge seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the minutes as amended.

Public Comments

None.

Aquatics Facilities Update

Rhett Evans updated the Board on Mesa's aquatic facilities. Mr. Evans gave the Board a brief historical background stating that a Quality of Life (Q of L) sales tax was passed by voters in 1998, with a portion of those funds earmarked for an indoor aquatic center. Since that time, substantial budgetary constraints have had to be addressed, and aquatic trends and priorities have changed. Instead, the City renovated Carson Pool and is currently renovating Rhodes and

Kino pools. New pool construction is slated at Skyline High School. A summary of each facility follows:

Rhodes

- New diving area, zero depth entry and splash pad
- New FlowRider® amenity (standing wave sheet for surfing, boogie boarding, etc.) that is targeted toward the teen population
- New concession and picnic areas, bath house, shaded bleachers and additional shaded areas
- 25-yard pool capable of holding competitions (used by Dobson High School)
- Opening targeted for July 4, 2009

Kino

- Extending the footprint to include the area to the north of the old pool site
- New 50-meter stretch pool also capable of having two water polo matches simultaneously, or two 25-yard competitions; will be USA swim meet sanctioned and eligible for larger meets/regional competitions
- New 6-lane warm up pool
- New zero depth entry, single slide added
- New classroom and enclosed restrooms
- New boilers to heat the pool
- MPS to add parking
- Opening targeted for February 2009

Skyline High School

- Utilize available MPS high school property to benefit both MPS and the City
- Duplicate Kino configuration to save on design fees
- New 50-meter stretch pool with warm up pool
- New zero depth entry with a slide feature
- Add parking lot to be used by patrons of City-owned basin and MPS baseball patrons
- Opening targeted for Summer 2010

Mr. Evans stated that upon completion of these three projects, the \$25.1 million in Q of L funds allocated for aquatics will be exhausted.

2008/09 Budget and Capital Project Review

J.D. Dockstader gave the Board an update of capital projects for next fiscal year. He told the Board that \$29 million had been set aside for capital projects. He told the Board that a few of the projects had been carried over from the previous fiscal year.

Mr. Dockstader handed out a list of the capital projects and the associated projects costs and asked the Board if they had any questions.

Mr. Etheridge questioned the replacement of Parks vehicles and the types of vehicles that will be purchased and asked if the City was tied into any type of purchasing contract. Mr. Dockstader said that maintenance vehicles are in a rotational replacement program through the City's Fleet Support Division that considers the number of miles and years of service. Andrea Moore added that the vehicles listed were all pickup trucks and added that the total cost of each vehicle also includes equipment such as tow trailers, tool boxes, and lifts that are attached to the vehicle. Mr. Evans added that Fleet Support utilizes State Contract pricing for these purchases.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked about the demolition of the houses at Countryside Park and if that demolition was coordinated with the dog park project at the park. Mr. Dockstader said the demolition had recently been completed, with the intention of having this be the location of the future dog park. Mr. Evans added that the \$100,000 private donation will go towards the necessary amenities for the dog park. Russ Gillard said that the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation is trying to raise an additional \$100,000 for the dog park.

Mark Yarbrough asked about the dredging of Riverview Lake. Mr. Dockstader replied that this was preventative maintenance; the dredging of the lake is done periodically to avoid potential problems.

David Martinez asked if the list of capital projects was a “wish list.” Mr. Dockstader said that each project has a funding source attached to it and will be completed within this fiscal year.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked for more explanation regarding the cemetery niche bank. Mr. Dockstader stated that the current niche bank is 96 percent sold, and another niche bank of the same design and size would be built nearby costing \$220,000. He explained that the new trend is moving toward cremation as opposed to burial plots and the new construction will provide increased inventory.

Mr. Gillard questioned leasing as opposed to the purchase of cardio equipment at the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center (RMMC). Mr. Evans said that the issue with purchasing equipment has been to find a company that will warranty the equipment at a commercial level. He said that there is a plan in place to eventually phase out all of the leases and own the equipment with a good warranty agreement.

Review and Consider Approval of Master Plan Update

Ms. Moore reviewed the reasons behind the exercise in updating the Master Plan for the new members of the Board. She said the Master Plan was approved by City Council in 2002 with \$800 million needed for implementing improvements to parks and facilities. By 2007, the department had only accomplished two percent of the Master Plan goals. Staff decided that it was time to review the Master Plan to get a more realistic picture, given the City’s financial situation. Ms. Moore said that the Board started the process of reviewing the 2002 Master Plan in November 2007 by evaluating the department’s programs and facilities and the financial outlook. The Board also reviewed the new facilities targeted across the City to delete targets that are no longer desirable.

Ms. Moore explained that the target areas have now been revised based on previous Board discussions that included target areas for new facilities across the City and additional recommendations. Staff wants the Board’s approval on this revised Master Plan before it is brought to public meetings and to the City Council.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if the Board would be able to revise the Master Plan at a later date if additional funding became available. Ms. Moore replied that the Board could certainly revise the Master Plan later if necessary.

Mr. Etheridge asked if the target circles include land acquisitions. Ms. Moore stated that the circles included land acquisitions and construction of facilities, but not renovations to existing facilities. Mr. Etheridge further inquired whether previous Board discussions had considered the recent decline in land costs so that more targets could be added back in. Ms. Moore explained

that the numbers were based on 2002 costs before the price of land increased so dramatically. She added that some HOA's provide recreational facilities.

Mr. Martinez asked if the revised service circles represent all parks that will be built up to the year 2025. Ms. Moore said that the assumption is that a parks bond question, sales tax, property tax, or some other funding source that does not currently exist will become available. Mr. Evans added that in order to produce a bond package for a citizen vote, the City needs to have in place a clear idea of what Mesa should look like in the future and what the parks bond package would offer the citizens. Ms. Moore added that the target areas will help staff justify what the City is asking the developers to include in their plans.

Mr. Gillard reminded the Board that this is just a proposal which would still need Council approval in order to decide whether to go forward with obtaining additional funding in the form of bonds.

Mr. Evans stated that staff was currently in discussion with developers who are looking to City staff to set the standard or ratio of park land per 1,000 residents. The revised measure is 4.2 acres per 1,000 residents, compared to the previous standard of 6.6 acres per 1,000 residents.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked about deleting target circles on Master Plan maps. Ms. Moore said she would be deleting only circles in which no additional land acquisition would be required. Mr. Yarbrough suggested highlighting future park development areas for Council. Mr. Gillard added that the maps should define target areas as requiring land acquisition. Ms. Wilson suggested additional narrative on maps. Michelle Udall suggested having a separate map showing land owned and areas where land needs to be acquired.

Ms. Wilson voiced concern over selling Beverly Park parcel. Ms. Moore said the City continues to experience vandalism on that parcel. Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked about alternatives for parks in that area. Ms. Moore said small parcels of land in the area could be used to build small play/park areas to meet a neighborhood park need. Ms. Moore said the area is still eligible for federal assistance in developing park land.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked to have Beverly Park area added to the September agenda. Ms. Wilson suggested having a representative from Mesa Grande Community Alliance attend. Mr. Evans suggested inviting Police Department representatives, and neighboring homeowners as well.

The Board agreed a park is needed within that target circle, but not necessarily in Beverly Park. Mr. Evans suggested discussing the sale of that land at a later date on another agenda.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if the Board was ready for a motion to approve the Master Plan target area updates as shown. Mr. Etheridge made a motion, Mr. Gillard seconded. Mr. Martinez then asked for further clarification. Further discussion ensued regarding the Master Plan maps, after which time the Board voted on the motion. The initial motion was unanimously defeated.

Mr. Etheridge then moved to approve the Master Plan with the noted exceptions of removing the circles that were marked out, removing the green notes box on the maps, adding park development to the target areas and updating the legend. Mr. Gillard seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Director's Comments

- Countryside Park Update – Mr. Evans told the Board the two houses at the corner of the Countryside Park property had been demolished, paving the way for a dog park area to be built. He mentioned that the Foundation for Mesa Parks & Recreation had received a donation of \$100,000 to build the dog park, which would be built with private funds.
- Trust for Public Land Information – Information was sent to Board members and shows Mesa's ranking in its park land against other cities of similar size in the country. In the future, staff would like to go through these ratios and talk about the Board's strategic plan and how it compares to other cities in the study.
- Pool Water Quality Information – There was an outbreak of the cryptosporidium virus in Phoenix pools, which came to the public's attention through the media. Mesa also had to deal with outbreaks of this virus. Several individuals reported they had gotten sick from swimming in Mesa's pools, thereby prompting the City to bring in an agency to test the pool water. Staff then super-chlorinated all pools to avoid any further outbreaks of this virus. The City will be conducting a campaign to educate citizens to not come to the pool if they are sick in order to prevent the spread of viruses.
- Kleinman Park Cell Tower Proposal – Verizon wants to place a cell tower at Kleinman Park on top of one of the light poles on the softball field, but they must have approval from the Parks Board before they can go through the planning/zoning and design review process. This presentation will occur at the next regular Parks Board meeting if Verizon is able to get their submittals to staff in time. Cell towers are beneficial to the parks system because the revenue stays in the parks budget; it has been three years since the last cell tower proposal was brought to the Board.
- Calendar of Events (update on past/present events) – Mr. Evans reminded all Board members that any time there is an event or a particular interest at one of the parks facilities, or if they wish to attend a ride-along with a Park Ranger, please contact a staff member to make arrangements.

Reports on meetings and/or events attended by Board Members

Mr. Yarbrough reported that Mesa hosted the Junior State Little League tournament this year at Fitch and Gene Autry parks. The tournament was very successful with many compliments from parents regarding the excellent condition of the ball fields and the helpful staff at both parks. The tournament generated 85 hotel room bookings in the City as well.

Ms. Udall said her children were registered in both the swim team and dive team this summer and complimented the aquatics program on its great classes and accommodating staff. Ms. Udall also attended the last two Fit City events with her family.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman called for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and convene an executive session. Ms. Udall motioned, Mr. Gillard seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn and convene an executive session.

At the conclusion of the executive session, Ms. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the regular meeting. Ms. Udall seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the regular meeting.

Mr. Gillard made a motion to approve staff to negotiate for the purchase of land for cemetery expansion, Mr. Martinez seconded, and it was unanimously carried to approve the motion.

Ms. Gullatt-Whiteman asked if there were any other items for discussion; the Board had no additional comments. Ms. Udall made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Etheridge seconded, and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Rhett Evans
Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department Director